



Writing in the Margins: Strategy Handout

"Writing in the Margins" is a cognitive reading strategy that makes transparent six ways competent readers process and react to ideas in texts. The table below details how to use each of the six "Writing in the Margins" strategies. The work that readers do in the margins depends on what the text says and what the text does. Use the questions next to the individual strategies to help you write ideas in the margins.

	Strategy Description	Guiding Questions
Clarify	Clarify complex ideas presented in a text by analyzing and interpreting information while making inferences when necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the author saying? • What does the author mean? • What do I know so far?
Summarize	Write brief summaries, single words, or draw symbols that represent the main/essential ideas in a paragraph.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is this section about? • What information is essential? • What's most important? • What's the main idea?
Connect	Make connections within the text, to your own life and to the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have I experienced this? • How does this relate to that? • Can I relate to the ideas? • Who else believes this?
Respond	Respond to ideas in the text as you read. Your responses can be personal or analytical in nature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I feel while reading? • What is my personal reaction? • Do I agree or disagree? • Do I believe the author?
Illustrate	Visualize what the author is saying and draw an illustration in the margin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I see while reading? • What pictures come to mind? • Can I visualize what the author is saying?
Question	Question both the ideas in the text and your own understanding of the text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I want to know? • What else do I need to know? • What do I understand so far? • What is my reading purpose?